

LOS ANGELES TIMES

9 October 1977

LESS SECRECY

Turner Plies
Rough Seas
at CIA Helm

BY NORMAN KEMPSTER

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Not much of the turbulence shows on the surface, but the Central Intelligence Agency is undergoing some of the most profound changes it has endured since its creation 30 years ago.

Change of some sort was almost inevitable after three years of controversy over assassination plots, drug experiments and other activities. But what is happening to the CIA could shape its performance and that of other U.S. intelligence agencies for years to come. And when things finally are sorted out, the CIA will bear the personal stamp of one man, an Oxford-educated admiral with a taste for the dramatic: Stansfield Turner.

With a rhetorical flourish, Turner began his tenure as the 10th CIA director by renouncing the philosophy that had sustained spies through the ages. In his agency, Turner declared, requirements of national security will never again be used to justify breaking the law.

"There is no balance between collecting intelligence and protecting the legal rights of American citizens," Turner said in an interview. "The legal rights have to come first."

"I'm not concerned about inhibitions on illegal activities, because we don't want to do anything illegal with regard to American citizens," he said. "We have adequate authority today to do the job of collecting the intelligence that this country needs."

Beyond this declaration of policy, which makes the CIA unique among the world's intelligence agencies, there have been dozens of changes on a day-to-day level affecting the way

the CIA and such other organizations as the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency go about their business. Although Turner did not originate all of the changes he has assumed responsibility for putting them into practice.

Among the innovations:

—The CIA's euphemistically named Directorate of Operations, the division that handles espionage and covert manipulation of foreign political activity, is cutting back more than 800 jobs. That's a huge reduction in a staff of fewer than 5,000. The reductions are to be made during the next two years.

—Efforts are being made to strip away some of the can't-talk-about-it secrecy that has always been part of the mystique of intelligence. The CIA years ago told its story through books it covertly financed while classifying its own reports. Now it is openly publishing its studies on such topics as oil reserves in the Soviet Union and international terrorism.

And for the first time the agency is offering the public guided tours of its campus-like headquarters in Langley, Va., a Washington suburb.

—A special committee including officials from other government agencies has been created to determine the sort of information that should be collected by the previously free-wheeling CIA. It is the first time the agency has been required to deal with such an "intelligence users" group, and the policy could have far-reaching consequences.

So far, Turner has earned high marks from the White House and from Capitol Hill for what he has been doing. A key presidential aide said of Turner: "We work together very smoothly."

But within the intelligence establishment, the reaction to Turner is less enthusiastic. Although they seldom voice their complaints in his presence, some of the CIA's old hands grumble that Turner's ideas and methods threaten to wreck what they like to call the world's most effective intelligence organization.

"There are just one hell of a lot of people who are unsure of themselves, unsure of their future," said a former high-ranking CIA official who has maintained close ties with many of his colleagues. "There is a feeling over there that they are surviving day by day."

in previous assignments, he lacks broad experience in intelligence gathering and has seldom had to tackle such a long-range project as reshaping the CIA.

Also, some present and former intelligence officials are skeptical about Turner's ability to stay within the law if he ever faces the type of crisis that recurrently plagued his predecessors: the White House demanding results



Stansfield Turner

Times photo

that the CIA finds it difficult to produce without breaking the rules.

In addition, Turner faces rivalry with the Defense Department over the direction of the total intelligence community. And he must contend with a CIA that has been demoralized for several years.

For his part, Turner shrugs off talk about CIA morale problems.

"Any time you make a change in a well-established bureaucratic institution, you meet resistance," he said.

"I've been around large organizations long enough to know that if the junior officers weren't complaining in the ward room, I'd be concerned that they had lost their spunk."

Although most of the resistance centers on concern about basic policy questions, some of the problems stem from a peculiar chemical reaction between the four-star admiral and the civilian professional spies who are the backbone of the CIA.